



# PROGRESS REPORT

FOR THE YARRA STRATEGIC PLAN — OCTOBER 2018



# Contents

<b>Our Yarra, Birrarung</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The Yarra Strategic Plan</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Informing the plan</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Achieving the community's vision for the Yarra</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>What we have achieved towards the vision</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>What makes the Yarra special</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Planning for the Yarra's future</b>	<b>19</b>
Upper rural reach	20
Lower rural reach	22
Suburban reach	24
Inner city reach	26
<b>Governance</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Forward timeline</b>	<b>30</b>







# Our Yarra, Birrarung

*With the launch of the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision in May 2018, this progress report provides a high-level update on our work to date and outlines how the vision will be brought to life through the draft Yarra Strategic Plan.*

Our Yarra River, Birrarung, and its lands are the lifeblood of Greater Melbourne and the Yarra Valley, a magnificent natural asset rich in environmental, economic and cultural value. The headwaters of the Yarra River flow from the pristine flanks of Mt Baw Baw, where they feed the Upper Yarra Reservoir from a protected forested catchment. Downstream of the dam wall, the river flows through more than 200km of valleys, agricultural land and suburbs into the heart of Melbourne.

Known as Birrarung in the Woi-wurrung language, the river is central to the history, economy, health and culture of the Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri people. The Yarra is an iconic symbol of Victoria, providing 70% of Melbourne's drinking water and boasting 2,450 hectares of urban parkland and green open space.

From farmers to anglers, boaters to cyclists, the Yarra and its lands are a community treasure, and have been valued and protected by Traditional Owners for around 65,000 years.

As Greater Melbourne changes, the Yarra River faces challenges including population growth, climate change and development. By

2041 the population is expected to double and over 140,000 additional homes will be constructed within the Yarra corridor. Climate change will mean more extreme weather events, including longer and more frequent droughts and more intense rainfall events, which put vegetation and habitat at risk.

We are now at a turning point in the river's history. In order to respond to these challenges we need a new approach to ensure the health of the Yarra is protected and improved for future generations.

Once complete, the Yarra Strategic Plan will give effect to the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision and provide a single, integrated river corridor plan that enables collaborative management of the river with Traditional Owners, and guides localised planning, to ensure the Yarra is managed as one living and integrated entity.

The Yarra Strategic Plan will provide a ten year strategy to establish the foundation for long-term transformational change in governance, and guide us towards delivering the community's vision for the Yarra River.

# The Yarra Strategic Plan

Established in 2015, the Yarra River Protection Ministerial Advisory Committee undertook extensive engagement with community and industry stakeholders to provide recommendations to improve the management, promotion and protection of the Yarra River. The Yarra River Action Plan outlines 30 actions for delivery, which were strengthened by the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act* (the Act).

In 2017, the landmark *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act* passed through the Victorian Parliament, enshrining in law the protection of the Yarra River. The Act identifies the Yarra River and its corridor as 'one living, integrated natural entity for protection and improvement' and recognises Traditional Owners' custodianship and intrinsic connection to the river, Birrarung.

As Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri people have a deep cultural and spiritual connection with the Birrarung. The Wurundjeri's relationship extends the length of the river. The Birrarung was carved into the landscape many thousands of years ago through an extraordinary period of geological upheaval. The birth of the Birrarung was witnessed by the Wurundjeri people. That event has been passed down through the generations in an unbroken oral tradition. The Wurundjeri provide a unique knowledge and connection to the Birrarung. In early 2018, the Wurundjeri developed their vision

for the Birrarung that was formalised in a policy titled *Nhanbu narrun ba ngargunin twarn Birrarung* (Ancient Spirit and Lore of the Yarra). This Water Policy defines the Wurundjeri's aspirations in planning, policy and decision making to enhance the integrity of the Yarra Strategic Plan.

In line with community feedback, the Act calls for modern governance and management arrangements that recognise the importance of the Yarra River and its parklands to the economic prosperity and vitality of Melbourne.

Currently, many decisions relating to statutory planning, public land management and waterway management are made independently of each other. The Yarra Strategic Plan will be the first integrated river corridor strategy, driven by a 50 year community vision, which will enable agencies to plan, protect and manage the river corridor as one living, integrated natural entity.

The Yarra Strategic Plan will act as an overarching strategy to integrate the many plans, regulations and investment programs of the various agencies and organisations that help manage the Yarra River. As the plan is implemented and other strategies are updated, it is anticipated that there will be greater alignment with the Yarra Strategic Plan.

## Policy drivers

- Population and development pressures
- Land management outcomes
- Governance issues
- Infrastructure impacts
- Environmental outcomes
- Community and environmental groups
- Business and industry
- Climate

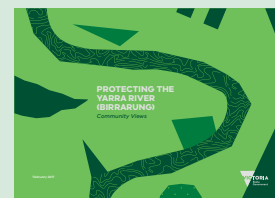
## Yarra River Protection Ministerial Advisory Committee (2015-16)



Discussion Paper



Community Views Report



Final MAC Report

## Legislative Response

### Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017

- Birrarung Council (voice of the river)
- Designated lead agency
- **Yarra Strategic Plan and Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision**



- River corridor guidelines

## Policy Response

### Yarra River Action Plan February 2017

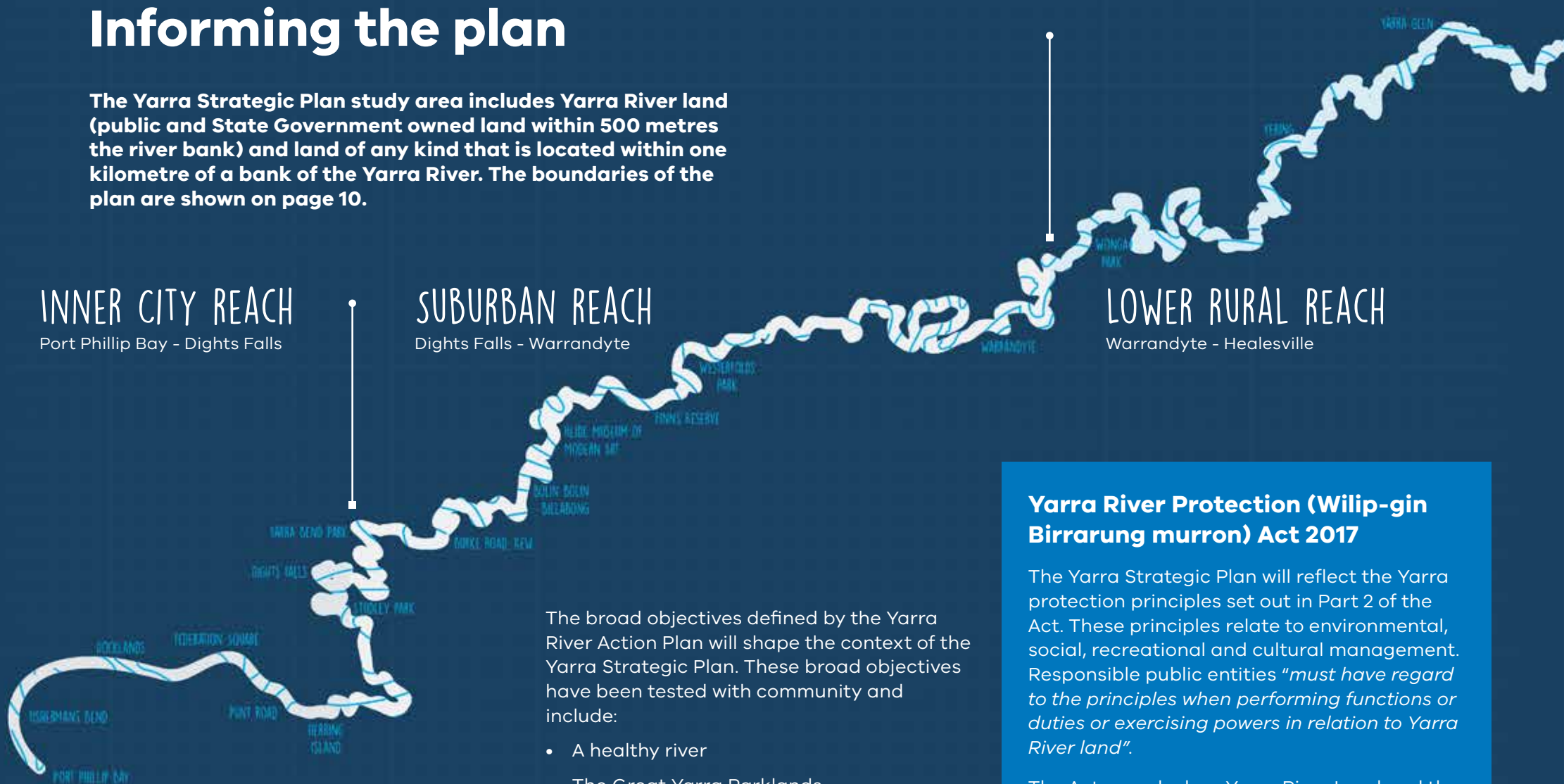
The Yarra River Action Plan contains 30 actions to ensure the long-term protection of the Yarra River and its parklands.

## Existing policy context

- Plan Melbourne 2017-2050
- Water for Victoria
- Healthy Waterways Strategy
- Planning Schemes
- Precinct structure planning
- Catchment management planning
- Integrated Water Management Forums
- Other State and Federal Legislation

# Informing the plan

**The Yarra Strategic Plan study area includes Yarra River land (public and State Government owned land within 500 metres the river bank) and land of any kind that is located within one kilometre of a bank of the Yarra River. The boundaries of the plan are shown on page 10.**



## Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017

The Yarra Strategic Plan will reflect the Yarra protection principles set out in Part 2 of the Act. These principles relate to environmental, social, recreational and cultural management. Responsible public entities *“must have regard to the principles when performing functions or duties or exercising powers in relation to Yarra River land”*.

The Act may declare Yarra River Land and the Greater Yarra Urban Parklands.

Part 5 of the Act establishes the Birrarung Council to provide advice to the Minister in relation to Yarra River land.

- The broad objectives defined by the Yarra River Action Plan will shape the context of the Yarra Strategic Plan. These broad objectives have been tested with community and include:
- A healthy river
  - The Great Yarra Parklands
  - A culturally diverse riverscape
  - Securing the Yarra footprint
  - Modern governance arrangements
  - Community prosperity





## UPPER RURAL REACH

Healesville - Upper Yarra Dam

In 2017, over 2000 Victorians from all walks of life contributed to the development of the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision. From sharing stories to attending community events, community members told us what they love about the river and how they want it to be cared for in future.

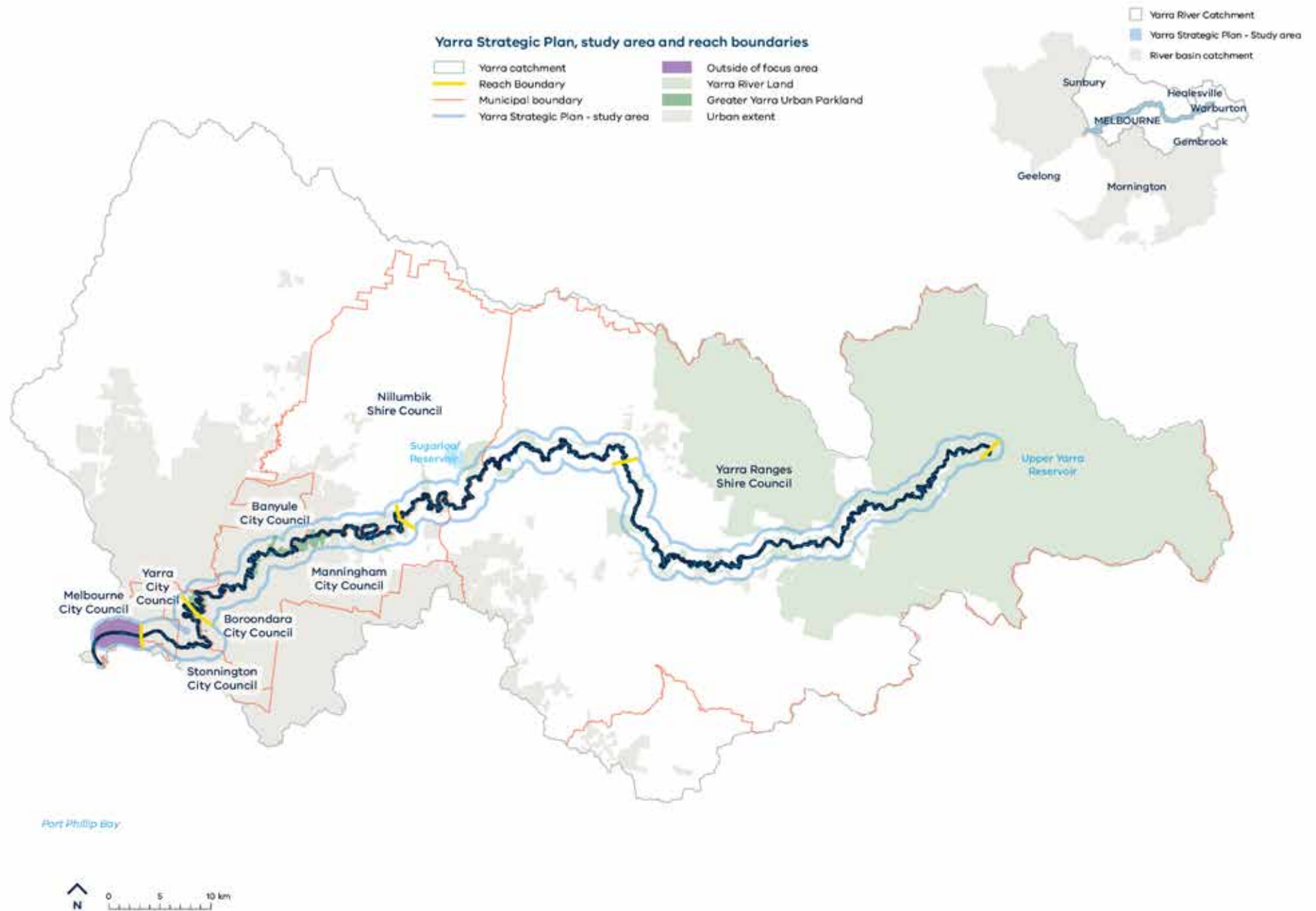
In February 2018, 24 passionate citizens were selected from along the length of the river to write the community vision. The group, known as the Yarra River Community Assembly, reviewed the information gathered from the broader community, heard from experts and Wurundjeri Elders and used this information to write the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision.

The Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision and Yarra Strategic Plan cover the length of the river, from the Upper Yarra Reservoir to inner city Melbourne.

To reflect the unique characteristics of the Yarra, the river has been sectioned into four distinct reaches and a vision has been written for each reach. The four reaches are:

- **Upper rural:** Upper Yarra Reservoir to Healesville
- **Lower rural:** Healesville to Warrandyte
- **Suburban:** Warrandyte to Dights Falls
- **Inner city:** Dights Falls to Webb Bridge

In mid-2018, further engagement was undertaken with community and stakeholders to explore how and where the plan can protect the Yarra River and its parklands into the future. This information is presented on the following pages.



This map shows the boundaries of the Yarra Strategic Plan study area and some of the governance arrangements along the river corridor.

# Achieving the community's vision for the Yarra

Informed by the requirements of the Act, the Yarra Strategic Plan will bring the community's vision to life by fostering collaborative management, providing guidance to localised planning and development and identifying key actions for delivery over the next ten years.

Many of the aspirations for the Yarra require significant changes to be made by government agencies. As a ten year strategy, the Yarra Strategic Plan will establish the foundation for long-term transformational change and delivery of the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision.

The three core elements of the plan are:

- The Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision: articulating what community want from our river, now and into the future.
- Collaborative management: an overarching framework that enables partner agencies to make collective decisions for the interests of the whole river corridor.
- Planning and delivery: guidance for localised planning and delivery to ensure consistency along the river corridor.

## Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong) Act 2017



### Draft Yarra Strategic Plan

Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision	Collaborative management	Planning and delivery
Community direction for our river now and into the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Broad objectives for the Yarra Strategic Plan (as described on page 8).</li><li>• Performance objectives for waterway health, parklands amenity, landscape amenity and environmental, cultural and heritage values.</li><li>• A decision-making framework to guide transparent and co-ordinated decision making.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Land use framework that provides:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– the spatial context for waterway health, parklands amenity, landscape amenity and environmental, cultural and heritage values</li><li>– broad direction for the future use and development of the Yarra Strategic Plan area</li><li>– areas for protection.</li></ul></li><li>• Priority projects for delivery.</li><li>• Implementation and evaluation framework.</li></ul>



# What we have achieved towards the vision

To achieve the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision we need to set the right foundation for collaborative management of the Yarra over the next ten years. This means working collectively, across organisational boundaries, to improve outcomes for the river and the community.

The following examples highlight ways in which responsible public agencies along the river are already working in partnership to manage the river as one living and integrated entity. These examples provide a strong foundation for the delivery of the Yarra Strategic Plan and will help bring the community's vision for the Yarra to life.



## RECOGNISING POTENTIAL – CULTURAL RIVER PRECINCT STRUCTURE PLAN

The Cultural River Precinct Structure Plan provides a 50-year outlook covering directions for land use, open space and development over the coming decade in the Bulleen – Banyule Flats area of the Yarra, which includes parts of Ivanhoe East, Eaglemont, Heidelberg, Bulleen, Lower Templestowe, Viewbank, and Lower Plenty.

The structure plan will help realise the potential of this section of the river as an internationally significant cultural precinct centred on the relationship between the arts, nature and Aboriginal heritage.

The Yarra Strategic Plan is supported by the structure plan, which provides a deeper level of detail for this precinct's development pressures, cultural heritage considerations, network and access issues.



## EVOLVING PARTNERSHIPS – LAUNCH OF THE WURUNDJERI WATER POLICY

As Traditional Owners the Wurundjeri have contributed their unique knowledge and understanding of the river to the development of the Yarra Strategic Plan.

Six Wurundjeri Elders introduced the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017* into the Victorian Parliament in September 2017. The Act is one of the first in Australia to include Traditional Owner language in its body.

The Act establishes the Birrarung Council to act as a voice for the Yarra. The Council includes three Wurundjeri Elders.

Wurundjeri Elders and community have helped inform the development of the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision by presenting to the Yarra River Community Assembly and attending various engagement events.

In May 2018 the Wurundjeri Council launched their Water Policy *Nhanbu narrun ba ngargunin twarn Birrarung* meaning Ancient Spirit and Lore of the Yarra, with the Ministers for Water, Planning and Environment.

The policy outlines the Wurundjeri's aspirations for the Yarra River and will help shape the draft Yarra Strategic Plan.



## SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATIONS – YARRA4LIFE

Yarra4Life is a collaborative project which facilitates relationships between landholders, government, industry, community and Traditional Owners to improve the health of the Yarra.

The program is coordinated by Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority and helps create native vegetation links between existing parklands and reserves along the Yarra.

Yarra4Life also protects priority native vegetation on public and private land, preserving the habitat of two of Melbourne's iconic species – the Helmeted Honeyeater and the Leadbeater's Possum.

The program covers approximately 82,000 hectares within the Yarra Valley and aims to achieve Yarra4Life's vision: *Ecosystems across the Yarra4Life landscape are protected, connected and resilient, and supported by a community that values the natural environment.*

Yarra4Life works to improve water quality by collaborating with landowners to improve the environmental sustainability of their businesses.

Funding for the program comes from local and state government, as well as philanthropic organisations.

## STRONGER PLANNING CONTROLS FOR THE YARRA RIVER

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning has worked in partnership with Melbourne Water, Banyule, Boroondara, Manningham, Nillumbik, Stonnington and Yarra Councils to implement stronger interim controls to protect the Yarra River from inappropriate development.

Previously, a patchwork of planning controls existed to manage development pressures within the Yarra River corridor. Over time, this resulted in inconsistent outcomes and increasing development pressures, threatening the values of the Yarra River.

The interim Yarra River Protection Planning Controls (Amendment GC48) recognise the importance of the Yarra River and its parklands to the economic prosperity and vitality of Melbourne and operate to:

- ensure that all development is appropriately sited and designed to avoid encroachment on the Yarra river and its environs
- ensure that the landscape and environmental values of the Yarra River are protected

The interim controls came into effect in February 2017 and are due to expire after January 2021. The Yarra Strategic Plan will identify if and where the interim controls need to be strengthened or implemented permanently.





## SETTING THE SCENE – YARRA STRATEGIC PLAN MAP BOOK

As part of the development of the Yarra Strategic Plan, Melbourne Water has created a series of maps which encapsulate the spatial data from all 15 responsible public entities. The Map Book combines existing data in new ways to understand current land use trends and future pressures across the entire Yarra River corridor.

The data included in the maps covers access points, walking trails, heritage protections, environmental overlays, important views of the river, as well as priority areas for protection defined by other strategies.

The Map Book will inform the development of the Land Use Framework for the Yarra Strategic Plan.

The Map Book can be found at [imaginetheyarra.com.au](http://imaginetheyarra.com.au)





## WATERING OF THE BOLIN BOLIN BILLABONG

In October 2017 Minister for Water Lisa Neville joined Wurundjeri Elders Aunty Alice Kolasa and Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin, to officially begin the watering of the Bolin Bolin Billabong from the Yarra River.

The project was undertaken by Melbourne Water in partnership with Wurundjeri Council, the Victorian Environmental Water Holder, Manningham Council and Parks Victoria.

The project aimed to restore natural water flow regimes, remove weeds and rehabilitate the billabong, providing improved habitat for wildlife and enhanced amenity for the community.

Bolin Bolin Billabong has been a significant meeting place for the Kulin Nation for over 5000 years and remains a highly significant site today.

Introducing a more natural watering regime to Bolin Bolin was identified as a key action for early delivery in the Yarra River Action Plan. The project partners are now working to deliver a long term, natural watering regime into the future.



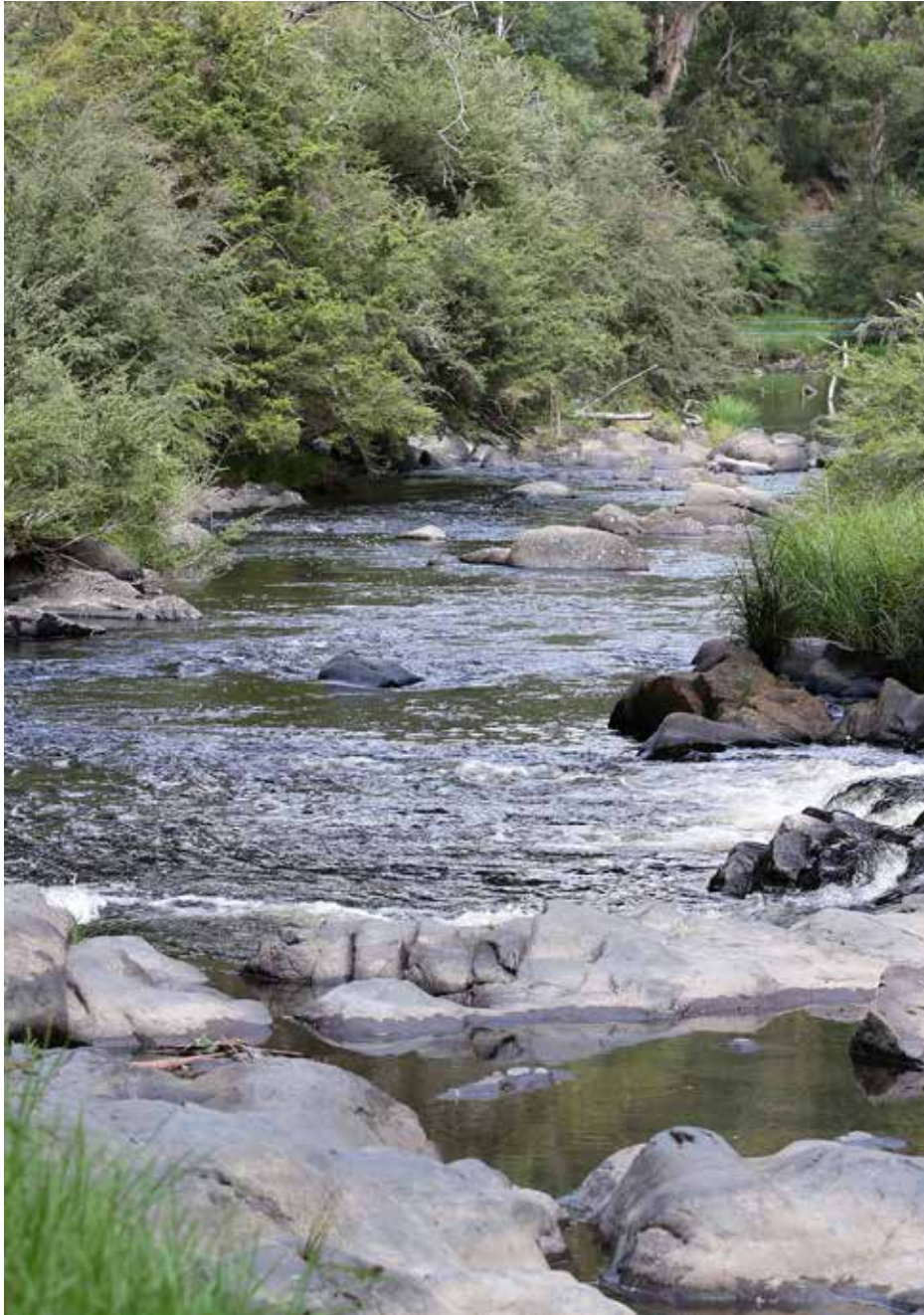
## COLLABORATION FOR RECREATION – FINNS RESERVE CANOE LAUNCH

Melbourne Water is working with Canoeing Victoria, paddling groups, local government and agencies to improve boat launch facilities along the Yarra River. When designing new access facilities, Melbourne Water recognises the need to be inclusive of all people and abilities.

Melbourne Water and Manningham Council recently partnered to deliver a new canoe launch facility at Finns Reserve in Templestowe Lower.

An existing river access point was upgraded with a new path, steps and a canoe launch to provide safer access to the river, while reducing damage to the surrounding environment.





## FUTURE FOCUSED – STORMWATER MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

In April 2018, the Improving Stormwater Management Advisory Committee was established to provide independent advice to the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Water on how to improve stormwater management and strengthen the links between planning and urban water management.

The committee provided its advice in August 2018, recommending two short-term planning reforms and sixteen longer-term policy directions.

The Government has considered this advice and in October 2018, implemented the committee's short-term recommendations: to expand the current stormwater management planning requirements to a broader range of developments and introduce an Integrated Water Management clause into the state's Planning Policy framework.

The changes will ensure new developments in Victoria are designed to better manage stormwater, helping to protect the long-term health of urban waterways, like the Yarra River and maintain the resilience and liveability of our towns and cities, particularly with future population growth and climate change.

As planning requirements are only part of the reforms needed to improve stormwater management, the government is considering the committee's longer-term recommendations and working closely with stakeholders to determine its response and opportunities for implementation.



# WHAT MAKES THE YARRA SPECIAL



Over **1000 cyclists** travel along the Main Yarra Trail between 7am and 9am on weekdays



**1/3** of Victoria's animal species are found in the Yarra catchment



**15 government agencies** contribute to managing the Yarra River corridor



Volunteers spend around **50,000 hours** per year managing parks along the Yarra

The community's top priorities from engagement:

- **recreation**
- **environmental protection**
- **protection of intangible river values.**



## 81% of people

surveyed believe the Yarra River is a key factor in Melbourne's liveability

## \$730 million

estimated annual benefit of the Yarra corridor from:

- waterway health
- recreation and amenity values
- cultural and heritage values
- Landscape features and values



## \$31 million

estimated investment by public entities in the Yarra River corridor in the 2017/18 financial year



There are **3,977 MCGs** worth of parkland and open space along the Yarra



The Yarra has been a source of **artistic inspiration** for thousands of years with the river expressed in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous art and music



There are **179 recorded Aboriginal archaeological and cultural sites** along the Yarra River (source: ACHRIS database)

The whole river corridor is designated as an area of **Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity**

The Yarra corridor is:

**22% urbanised**

**21% natural vegetation**

**57% agricultural**



*"And I love the fact that the river when you go from the source through to the mouth it takes you on this journey from wilderness through farmlands, through suburbia and into the heart of the city and it takes us through almost like a journey through time."*

Community member

More than **3300 people** have had their say on the development of the Yarra Strategic Plan

# PLANNING FOR THE YARRA'S FUTURE

**249,284**

population within the  
Yarra corridor in 2016

**533,000+**

population within the  
Yarra corridor by 2041



2017 was  
Victoria's 6th  
hottest year  
on record



## In order to bring the community's vision to life, the Yarra Strategic Plan is guided by three strategic directions:

- Traditional Owners of the Birrarung, the Wurundjeri, bring unique knowledge, connections and understandings of the river and their involvement in policy planning and decision-making will enhance the integrity of the plan.
- Collaborative, modern governance and management arrangements will set the foundation for long-term transformational change across partner agencies, enabling them to work towards shared goals for the Yarra and realise the 50 Year Community Vision.
- Waterway and land use planning are connected. The Yarra Strategic Plan will be the first strategy to provide an integrated river corridor plan that helps inform localised planning and delivery. It will ensure that agencies plan, protect and manage the river corridor as one living, integrated natural entity.

## Early directions for the Yarra Strategic Plan:

- Meet or exceed (where practical) Healthy Waterways Strategy commitments.
- Manage water quality risks through land use planning.
- Investigate how Yarra River lands can protect river corridor values.
- Improve landscape and built form interface with the river.
- Provide interpretation of heritage sites along the river and connect the community to the rich history of the Yarra.
- Expand the river's local parklands and trails to improve access.

## WHOLE RIVER 50 YEAR VISION



*Our Yarra River, Birrarung, is recognised around the world as an iconic example of a nurturing relationship between a river and its community.*

Flowing from source to sea, it is the resilient lifeblood of past, present and future generations of Victorians. It connects and enriches our flourishing city, suburbs, regions and beyond.

Our Yarra River, Birrarung, its essential role in our lives and its rich history, are respected, understood and protected. It has cared for us for thousands of years and will for thousands to come.

The vital and continued role of Traditional Owners as custodians of the river, and its role in their culture, is recognised and celebrated.

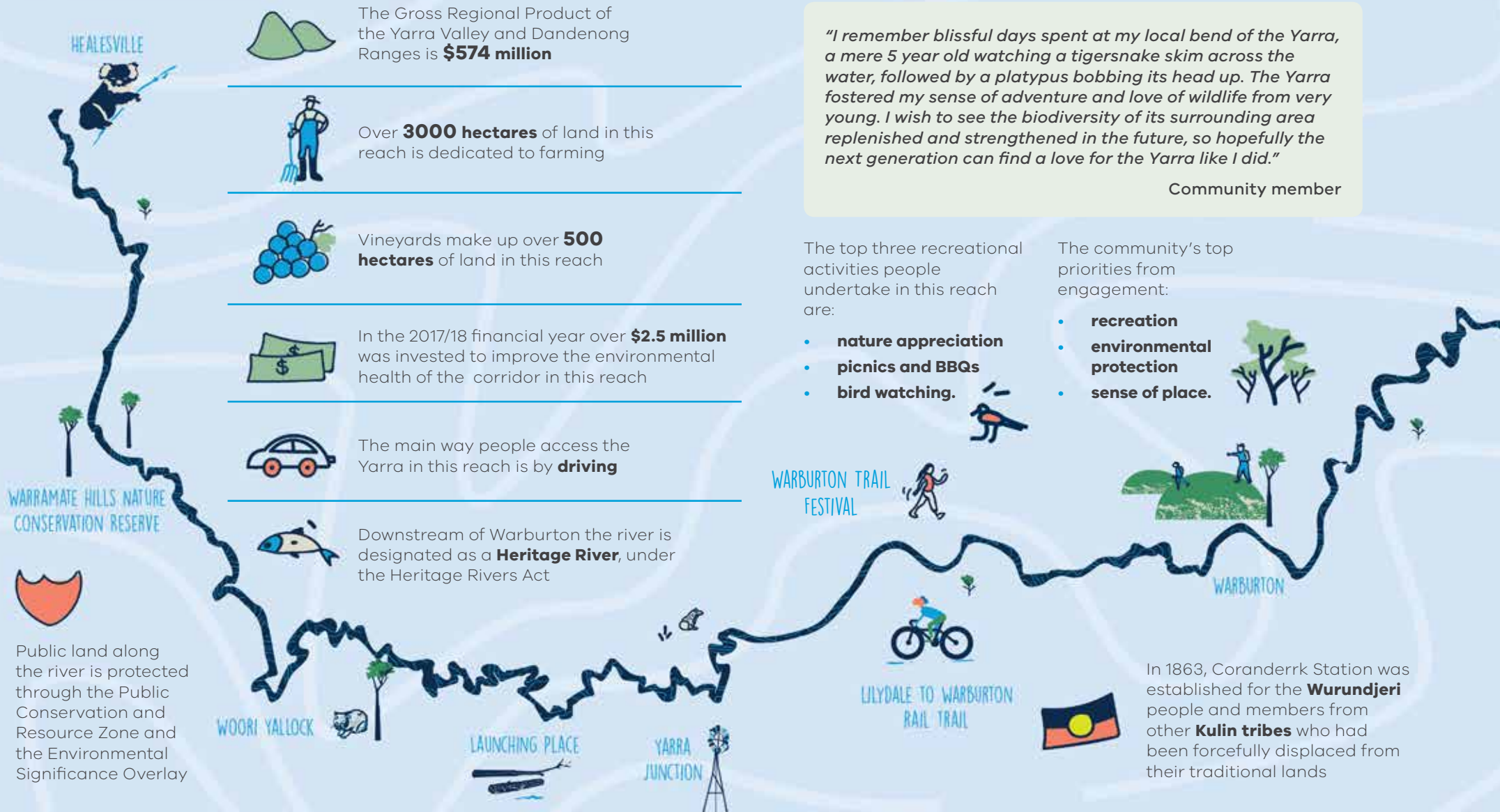
Our Yarra River, Birrarung, and its diverse surrounding landscapes provide a place of refuge, recreation, learning and livelihood. It brings communities together and supports sustainable local economies.

Its clean waters and connected network of thriving green spaces nurture biodiversity, and deepen the relationship between people and nature.

Our Yarra River, Birrarung, is respected as a sacred natural living entity and everyone takes responsibility for its care. Its health and integrity are paramount and uncompromised.

What is good for the Yarra is good for all.

# UPPER RURAL REACH – UPPER YARRA DAM TO HEALESVILLE





# UPPER RURAL REACH – WHAT THE COMMUNITY TOLD US



## Community directions for identifying areas for protection:

- Consider the whole reach as a priority for ecological protection.
- Ensure a consistent approach to protection founded on ecological evidence.
- Minimise the impact of surrounding land uses on the river.
- Ensure individual river custodians help to develop plans to maintain river health.
- Focus on improving existing public access, rather than creating new access.
- Value the knowledge of the landowners who care for the river.
- Protect clear access routes in high fire areas.
- Consider how communities can be protected in the event of a bush fire.

## What success looks like for the community in 10 years:

- Increased awareness, responsibility and custodianship of the Yarra River by community, landowners and responsible authorities.
- Environmental improvements such as water quality, water flows and weed management.
- Implementation and funding of plan and actions.
- Landowners and community continue to be engaged and participate in the implementation of the plan.
- Landowners and responsible authorities work together to manage the river environment.



## UPPER RURAL REACH 50 YEAR VISION



*Goodness flows from the top down.*

Careful and innovative management of our Yarra River, Birrarung, and its neighbouring lands ensures the natural replenishment of local billabongs and wetlands and supports a continuous envelope of spectacular indigenous vegetation.

Our Yarra River, Birrarung, supports employment and the social and economic wellbeing of local communities. Those communities and their landholders provide a valuable connection with the natural environment and the water.

The potential of our reach's biodiversity is fostered and enhanced by our enthusiastic local custodians, supporting the environmental health of the entire Yarra River, Birrarung.

# LOWER RURAL REACH – HEALESVILLE TO WARRANDYTE



In the 2017/18 financial year over **\$30,000** was invested to improve the environmental health of the corridor in this reach



Over **2000 hectares** of land in this reach is dedicated to farming



Access to the river is limited in this reach, except in areas near towns



The main way people access the Yarra in this reach is by **driving**



There will be around **1.1 million visitors** to the Yarra Valley in 2018



Garambi Baan or “**laughing waters**”, near modern day Warrandyte, was a site where Wurundjeri ancestors practiced sophisticated and sustainable aquaculture

The community’s top priorities from engagement:

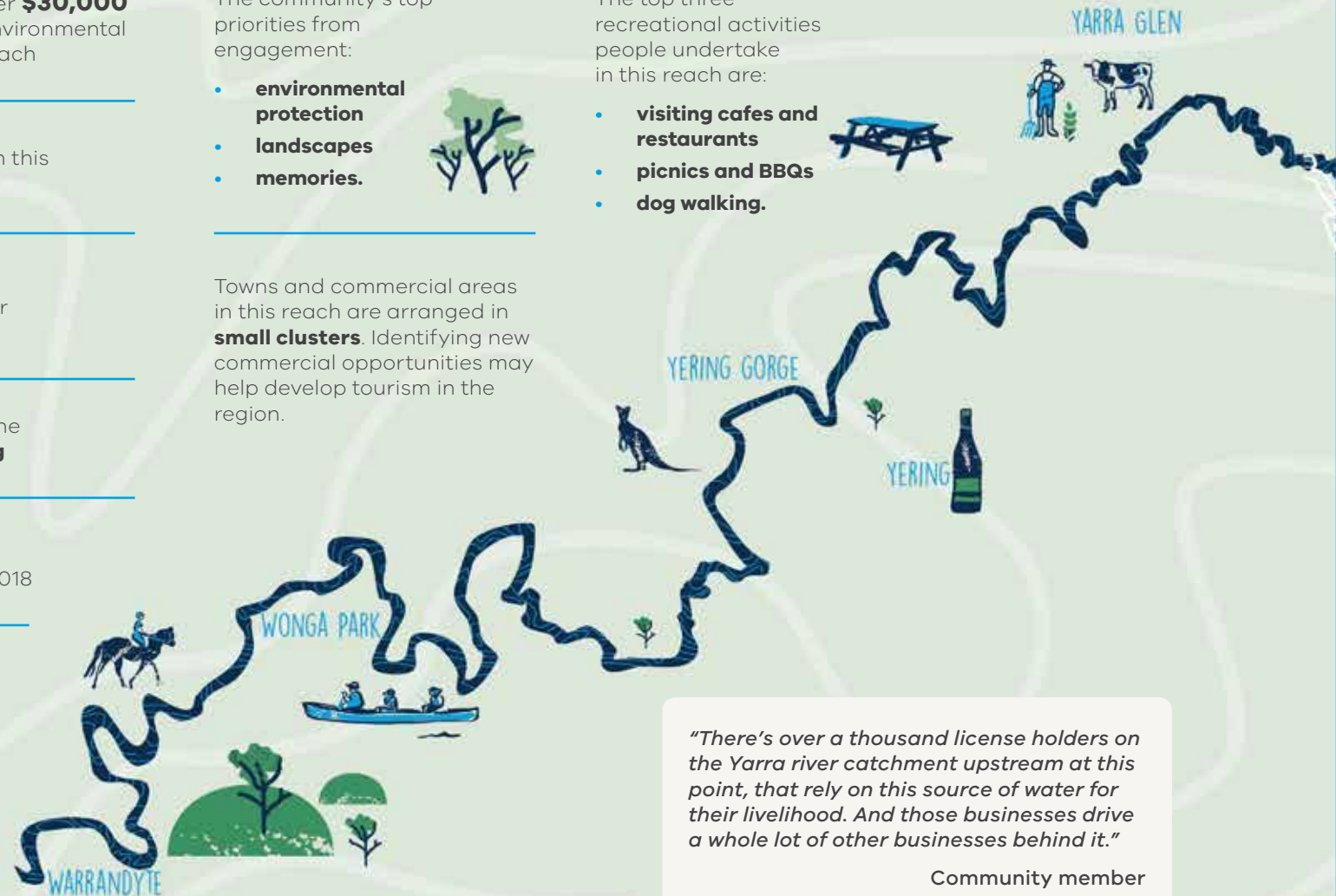
- **environmental protection**
- **landscapes**
- **memories.**



Towns and commercial areas in this reach are arranged in **small clusters**. Identifying new commercial opportunities may help develop tourism in the region.

The top three recreational activities people undertake in this reach are:

- **visiting cafes and restaurants**
- **picnics and BBQs**
- **dog walking.**



*“There’s over a thousand license holders on the Yarra river catchment upstream at this point, that rely on this source of water for their livelihood. And those businesses drive a whole lot of other businesses behind it.”*

Community member

# LOWER RURAL REACH – WHAT THE COMMUNITY TOLD US



## Community directions for identifying areas for protection:

- More informed advice about how the environment is protected.
- Consistency in protection across responsible authorities.
- Protection from domestic animals in high biodiversity areas.

## What success looks like for the community in 10 years:

- Commitment from different levels of government to improve environmental health.
- Introduction of signage and re-vegetation.
- Strong community support for protection of the Yarra.
- The river is effectively managed with clear and transparent actions.
- Greater understanding and awareness of environmental protection.
- Greater protections for sites of cultural significance.
- Progress against a variety of targets.



## LOWER RURAL REACH 50 YEAR VISION



*From Healesville to Warrandyte our Yarra River, Birrarung, and its surrounding environment is embraced and cared for through a deep understanding and sense of custodianship, the way the Wurundjeri have always done.*

It is embraced by a wide, mature cloak of indigenous vegetation through the flats, filled with the sights and sounds of native animals and birds.

Our Yarra River, Birrarung, is home to happy farmers, making a living and caring for the river and its lands.

People visit the river in key locations to meet and play in, on and beside the water whilst learning about its rich history, its Wurundjeri carers and incredible environmental values.

From Yering Gorge, our Yarra River, Birrarung, is continuously replenished by plants and animals from Kinglake and beyond, joining the river on its journey to the city.



# SUBURBAN REACH – WARRANDYTE TO DIGHTS FALLS



In the 2017/18 financial year over **\$3 million** was invested to improve the community use and amenity of the river and its parklands in this reach



In the 2017/18 financial year over **\$1.1 million** was invested to support cultural values along the corridor in this reach



**1025 people** cycle to work every day in this reach



Visitors in this reach are most likely to be **residents**



The main way people access the Yarra in this reach is by **cycling**



Bolin Bolin means “**many lagoons**”. The Bolin Bolin Billabong was a highly significant gathering place for the Kulin Nation during iuk (eel) harvest time.

The community's top priorities from engagement:

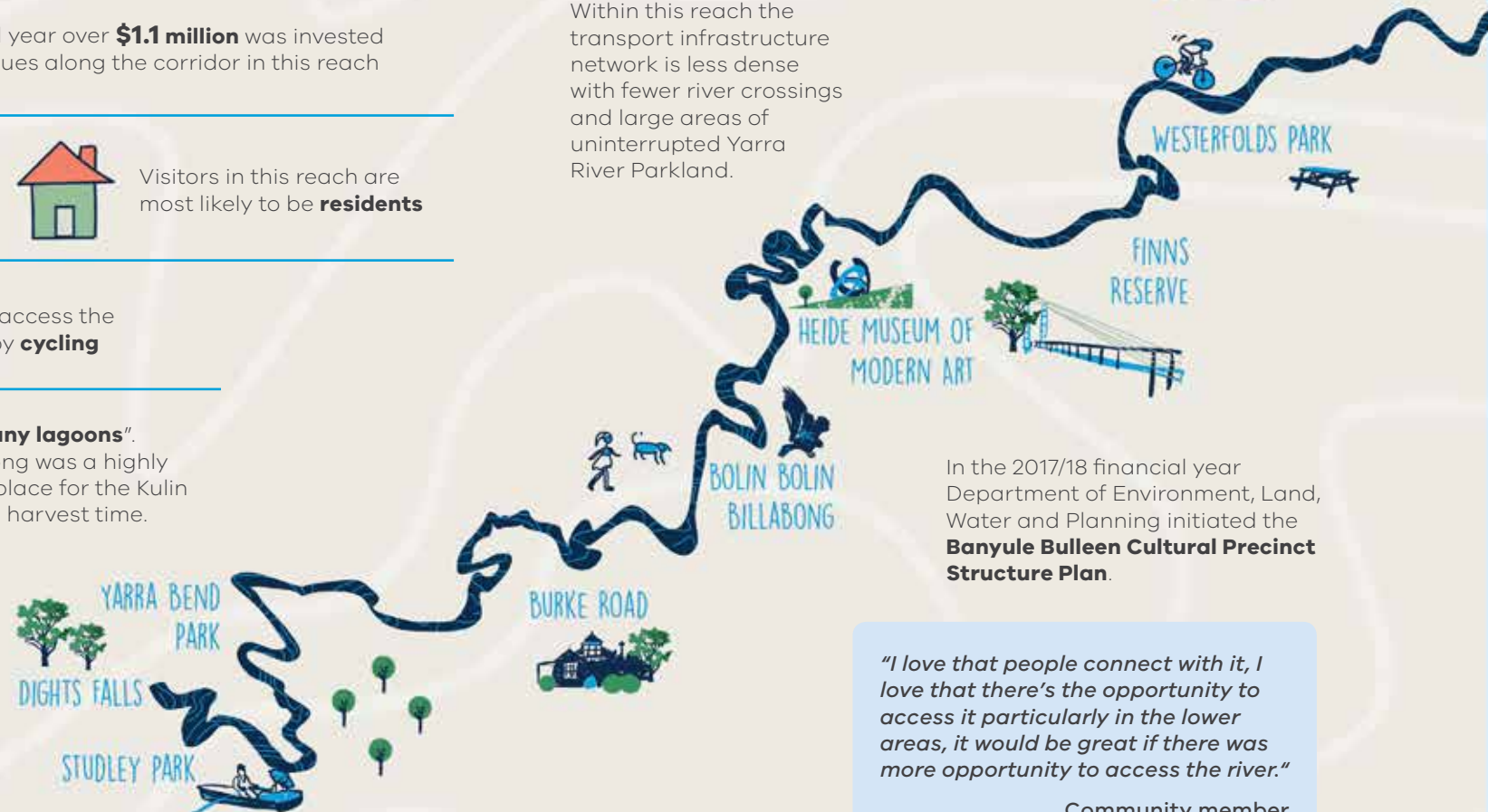
- **recreation**
- **environmental protection**
- **memories.**



Within this reach the transport infrastructure network is less dense with fewer river crossings and large areas of uninterrupted Yarra River Parkland.

Top three recreational activities people undertake in this reach are:

- **bike riding**
- **canoeing and rowing**
- **visiting cafes and restaurants.**

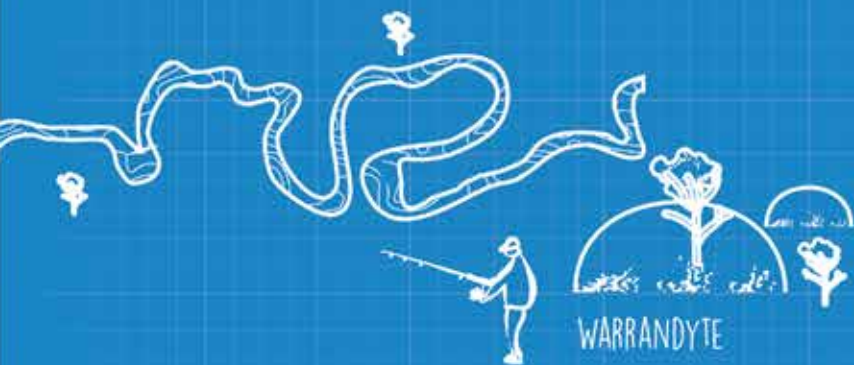


In the 2017/18 financial year Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning initiated the **Banyule Bulleen Cultural Precinct Structure Plan**.

*“I love that people connect with it, I love that there’s the opportunity to access it particularly in the lower areas, it would be great if there was more opportunity to access the river.”*

Community member

# SUBURBAN REACH — WHAT THE COMMUNITY TOLD US

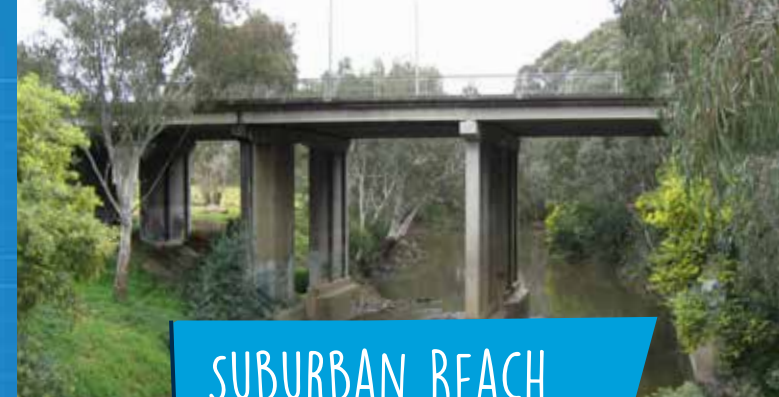


## Community directions for identifying areas for protection:

- Protect the river from erosion impacts caused by development.
- Consistency in protection across responsible authorities.
- Protect the river against non-native flora and fauna.

## What success looks like for the community in 10 years:

- The community is engaged and values the health of the river.
- There is a commitment from different levels of government to improve environmental health.
- The river is effectively managed.
- There are greater protections for sites of cultural significance.
- There is a high level of biodiversity along the river.
- Wurundjeri management and partnerships are best practice.
- The river and parklands are protected and accessible to the community.



## SUBURBAN REACH 50 YEAR VISION



*Our Yarra River, Birrarung, provides a continuous network of protected parklands, providing inclusive access to all.*

A covenant of custodianship is adopted by private landowners along the reach, embedding a culture of respect and responsibility for river values.

The river corridor provides a healthy natural environment, enabling swimming, relaxation and other recreational activities. Importantly, it also supports a flourishing natural ecosystem, including networks of billabongs and wetlands, for indigenous plants and animals to thrive.

This is a valued place of connection to Wurundjeri culture and community, with a network of hubs of learning, play and celebration. It benefits from a united and integrated approach to governance and land management, guided by the wisdom and practices of Traditional Owners, keeping culture not just in the past but alive into the future.

# INNER CITY REACH – DIGHTS FALLS TO WEBB BRIDGE



In the 2017/18 financial year over **\$1.3 million** was invested to improve the interface between development and the river corridor in this reach



In the 2017/18 financial year over **\$2.5 million** was invested to improve community use and amenity of the corridor in this reach



Threats to the health of the river can be cumulative. It can be difficult for councils to manage impacts resulting from land use upstream of their municipality

*"To be so close to the busy Melbourne City but also immersed amongst the trees and listen to the birds is a wonderful experience of finding balance and connecting to nature within the city."*

Community member



The confluence of the Merri Creek and the Yarra is highly significant to Traditional Owners.

The community's top priorities from engagement:

- **recreation**
- **environmental protection**
- **management of development.**



**3250 people** cycle to work daily in the inner reach



Head of the Yarra rowing event attracts **over 10,000** people to the river

**85,000** rowing members in 2017

The inner city reach is the **most intensively developed** part of the river corridor.



The main ways people access the Yarra in this reach are **walking** and **public transport**

Top three recreational activities people undertake in this reach are:

- **nature appreciation**
- **picnics and BBQs**
- **dog walking.**



DOCKLANDS



MOOMBA



BOLTE BRIDGE



FISHERMANS BEND



MELBOURNE FOOD AND WINE FESTIVAL



PORT PHILLIP BAY





# INNER CITY REACH – WHAT THE COMMUNITY TOLD US



## Community directions for identifying areas for protection:

- Improved stormwater management.
- Protection against encroaching development.
- Protection of the sight lines along the Yarra.
- Opportunities to improve public access through private land development.

## What success looks like for the community in 10 years:

- There is a coordinated effort to implement the plan amongst responsible authorities.
- The health of the Yarra River and surrounding parklands has improved.
- The community is engaged and values the health of the river.
- Environmental improvements are achieved.
- The community is involved in caring for the river.



## INNER CITY REACH 50 YEAR VISION



*Our Yarra River, Birrarung, is a thriving river for our thriving city.*

It provides a unique place of transition, both spiritually and physically. Here the river and its treasured banks and backdrops are Melbourne's meeting place; an inclusive and iconic place for connection, celebration, recreation and learning.

Our love for its vast and expanding green spaces and clean waters provide a healthy habitat for all.

# Governance

In order to achieve the 50 Year Community Vision, the Yarra Strategic Plan will be the first integrated river corridor plan to provide holistic guidance on water management, statutory planning and public land management.

The plan will guide the collaborative management of the river by 15 government agencies, Victorian Traditional Owners and community groups. To support this new way of working, two key governance groups have been established to guide the development and implementation of the Yarra Strategic Plan.

## Birrarung Council

The Birrarung Council is colloquially known as “the Voice of the River,” and has been established under the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017*. The Council will provide independent advice to the Minister for Water on the protection and improvement of the Yarra River landscape, including the development, operation and effectiveness of the Yarra Strategic Plan.

The Council will provide advice to the Minister on significant activities, issues and plans concerning the Yarra River and its lands, and report annually on the implementation of the Yarra Strategic Plan.

Eleven members have been appointed to the Council, led by Chair Christopher Chesterfield, who bring extensive knowledge and industry experience:

- Mr Allan Wandin
- Mr Ronald Jones
- Ms Margaret Gardiner
- Mr Warwick Leeson
- Ms Bronwyn South
- Mr Andrew Kelly
- Ms Prue Digby
- Ms Kirsten Bauer
- Ms Erin O'Donnell
- Ms Alexandra Lee

Council members include several Traditional Owners, environmental and agricultural industry groups, and local community groups.



## Yarra Collaboration Committee

The Yarra Collaboration Committee (YCC) provides strategic and operational advice on the development and implementation of the Yarra Strategic Plan.

Membership of the YCC consists of Wurundjeri Council representatives, an independent chair and a senior representative from each of the 15 responsible public entities:

- DELWP
- Melbourne Water
- Manningham Council
- Melbourne City Council
- Yarra City Council

- Banyule City Council
- Stonnington City Council
- Boroondara City Council
- Yarra Ranges Shire Council
- Nillumbik Shire Council
- Parks Victoria
- Transport for Victoria
- Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority
- Vic Roads
- Victorian Planning Authority

The YCC is responsible for collaboratively developing the Yarra Strategic Plan to ensure it delivers on the Yarra River 50 Year Community Vision.

Key functions of the YCC include:

- ensuring effective engagement with community and stakeholders to inform the development of the Yarra Strategic Plan
- communicating and championing the Yarra Strategic Plan with their organisations, stakeholders and community groups
- providing advice on key risks and opportunities for the Yarra Strategic Plan
- providing leadership and advice on achieving endorsement of the Yarra Strategic Plan.

Each of the responsible public entities will be required to endorse the Draft Yarra Strategic Plan in 2018. The process involves all agencies, and the Wurundjeri Council adopting the Draft Yarra Strategic Plan in readiness for a period of public consultation.



# Forward timeline

The insights gathered through community and stakeholder engagement will inform the development of the draft Yarra Strategic Plan.

Content will be tested with partner agencies through dedicated working groups and the Yarra Collaboration Committee.

In addition, the Birrarung Council will act as an independent voice for the river and consider the development of the Yarra Strategic Plan, including the scope and adequacy of the public engagement.

The Yarra River Community Assembly, which represents the diversity of the community from along the length of the river, will be involved in testing the content of the draft Yarra Strategic Plan to ensure it aligns with the community vision.

Once endorsed by our 15 agency partners, the draft Yarra Strategic Plan will be made available for public comment, for a period of at least two months, in 2019. As per the Act, the community engagement on the draft will seek to “collaborate with the community and ensure that community concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.”

At the conclusion of this period, all submissions will be considered and a revised draft Yarra Strategic Plan will be provided to our agency partners for endorsement.



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#IMAGINETHEYARRA

